

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing 21-24 May 2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.1 Domestic Policy

Topic: Business Advisory Forum - COAG Taskforce

Senator: Senator Payne

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Question:

With respect to the Taskforce established at the last COAG meeting to progress issues proposed by the Business Advisory Forum, can you please outline to the committee the process by which the Taskforce will progress the matters referred to it, in particular the reports and advice it will be presenting to COAG at its next meeting?

Answer:

The Taskforce is chaired by the Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Finance and Deregulation, and comprises a senior Commonwealth Treasury official and Deputy Secretary level representatives from both First Ministers and Treasury Departments in each State and Territory.

The Taskforce's work program includes providing advice to COAG on reforms covering environmental approvals; rationalisation of carbon reduction and energy efficiency schemes; energy market reforms; and lifting regulatory performance.

The Taskforce will provide advice to COAG at its next meeting on:

- the detail of the specific reforms;
- the likely costs and benefits of the reforms, drawing on high level advice from the Productivity Commission and an assessment against the COAG reform principles; and
- sensitivities, stakeholder views and implementation pathways and challenges.

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The Taskforce will also provide a paper on the 'Red Tape Challenge'; and advice on the merits of proposals identified by the Business Regulation and Competition Working Group and the Standing Council on Federal Financial Relations in earlier processes directed at identifying a new competition and regulatory reform agenda, but not picked up in the agenda developed through the Business Advisory Forum meeting process.